(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) whether the contractor who received the contract, has further sublet the contract at higher price, thus violating the terms of the contract, if so, the action taken or proposed to be taken against the contractor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) to (d) A tender was advertised in April 2000 for allotment of cycle/scooter stand contract at Ludhiana Railway Station. However, the tender was discharged due to less offer quoted by the bidder as compared to the revised parking charges approved by the Administration in May, 2000. The tender was re-advertised to fetch reasonable amount.

(e) No, Sir.

Railways Communication Network

1400. SHRI S. RAMACHANDRAN PILLAI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the railways are on the threshold of providing the country a parallel communication highway of millions of voice and data transmission channels with vast expansion by the OFC facility;

(b) whether it is also a fact that a Railtel Corporation of India has already been set up for the purpose and the total long-distance communication market is estimated at Rs. 10,000 crore annually;

(c) if so, how Government propose to arrange the huge finances; and

(d) how much cheap the communication network would be for vast rural and remote areas in the years to come?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Railways have decided to build a nation-wide broad band and multimedia network by laying Optical Fibre Cable (OFC) along Railway Track by utilising Railway's right of way through the medium of a professionally managed corporation. After Cabinet's approval, the corporation under Ministry of Railways has been formed. The corporation has been registered with the Registrar of Companies as Railtel Corporation of India Ltd. (RCIL).

(c) and (d) A consultant has been appointed to prepare business plan for the corporation. Decision regarding Financing and costing would be taken after submission of business plan by the consultant.